

Brinton 1704 House  
Oakland Road  
Dilworthtown Vicinity  
Delaware County  
Pennsylvania

HABS  
PA  
23-DIL.V  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
PA,  
23-DILV,  
1-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### BRINTON 1704 HOUSE

Street Address: Oakland Road, near junction of Route US 202  
and County Road #15199, Dilworthtown, Birmingham  
Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: Chester County Historical Society, 225 North  
High Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Present Occupant: Museum operated by Chester County Historical Society.

Present Use:

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This early (1704) stone house, although restored,  
retains much of its original architectural design  
and is representative of the larger type of dwell-  
ing house of a Chester County English Quaker.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: William Brinton 1704-1751; Edward Brinton 1751-1779; George Brinton 1779-1792; Joseph Brinton 1792-1802; Joseph Brinton (a cousin) 1802-1826; Thomas Brinton 1826-1829; Ziba Darlington (wife a Brinton) 1829-1860; Gideon Williamson 1860-1864; Henry Faucett and his son, Henry P. Faucett 1864-1926; Isaac Sherwood 1926-1946; Clarence E. Kemerly 1946; Francis D. Brinton 1946-1947, and he gave it to the Chester County Historical Society in 1947.
2. Date of erection: 1704
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Architect, unknown; restoration architect, G. Edwin Brumbaugh. Builder, suppliers unknown; stone came from a local quarry to the northeast of the property.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The original house had a basement kitchen, two rooms on the first floor and a large unfinished attic. It is built of quarried stone, the stone being laid in courses of various width. Walnut was used for door and window frames, as well as for interior partitions.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Before William Brinton's death the east room had been divided into

two smaller bedrooms, as they are today. Henry Faucett added a two and a half story frame wing to the east, one room to a floor and in 1881 he added a large two and a half story wing to the north, this of serpentine stone. The rest of the building was then painted green to match. In 1954 the frame and stone additions to the house were removed, as was the front porch added in the late 1820's and the side porch (to the west) probably built in 1881. Besides the physical evidence, voluminous records of the past hundred years and more gathered for the purpose aided in a true restoration.

6. Important old views and references: Oil painting by Thomas Eakins, painted in 1878 for Dr. John Hill Brinton. It is in private possession. A large series of photographs from about 1875 to date are available in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: William Brinton and his wife, Ann Bagley, came from Sedgeley parish, Staffordshire, England, and settled in Birmingham township, then Chester County, now Delaware County, in 1684. A plank house of poplar planks each about four inches thick was built - 21' by 25' - it was a story high or more probably a story and a half. The site was in the field directly to the north of the 1704 House. This house was occupied for twenty years by William Brinton and then by his son until 1704, when the new stone house was erected. Birmingham Friends Meeting was also first held in this plank house. William Brinton, the son, had been born in England and was married 1690 to Jane Thatcher, and it was for their growing family the new house was built. William the Builder was a member of the Provincial Assembly and active in the Friends Meeting. It was occupied by direct descendants until a law suit in 1802 awarded it to a Joseph Brinton in another line than the Joseph then living there. As noted above, it was in possession of Brinton descendants until 1860. A member of the family, John Hill Brinton from 1830-1892 wrote extensively on family history, and especially interviewed aged people of the area, gathering data on the house and those living in it. The entry for August 23, 1868, is very long and towards the end he wrote, "I thus relate these facts minutely in order that some future Brinton, descended from the Colonist (if he so minds) may restore the old house to its primitive aspect and plant memorial stones where these settlers rest."

When the builder and his wife died (1751 and 1756), very complete inventories were taken of the household articles, and these are used in furnishing the house. Today it represents the larger type of dwelling house of a Chester county English Quaker in the first half of the eighteenth century.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Sources, all to be found in the Chester County Historical Society. Classified printed and manuscript files in the Chester County Historical Society under the heading Brinton Family; Birmingham Township. Lands (a series of loose-leaf scrap books are maintained on this property); Diaries - Brinton.

D. Supplemental Material:

1. From original manuscript of "A Register of the Damages Sustained by the Inhabitants of the County of Chester in Pennsylvania from the Troops and Adherents of the King of Great Brittain during the present War agreeable to an Act of General Assembly passed September 21st 1782." In possession of Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

"An account of damage Waste spoil & destruction which done & committed by the army of the King of Great Brittain under the Imediate Command of Genl Howe at the Battle of Brandywine from Septr 11th to the 16th 1777 to the property Real & personal Belonging to George Brinton of the Township of Birmingham Viz-

4-1/2 Tun of Hay	L 13 . 10 .
200 Bushels of Wheat	75 . 0
35 do of Corn	6 . 2 . 6
30 do of Rye	7 . 10 .
15 do of Buckwheat	3 . 0
5 acres of Grass fit for the scythe	5 . 0
10 Bushels of Barley	2 . 10
1 Likely Young Mare	30 . 0
3 Horses	36 . 0
2 Bullocks	15 . 0
7 Cows	42 . 0
3 Yearling Heifers	6 . 0
2 spring Calves	2 . 0
25 sheep	18 . 15
6 Large Swine	13 . 10
9 smaller do	9 . 0
1 Young Mare taken away damaged	5 . 0
2 Falling axes	1 . 0
1 Broad ax	0 . 11 . 6
1 pair of Compasses	0 . 5
2 Chessels	0 . 5
1 shovel	1 . 3
1 pair of stillyards	1 . 10
1 Gun 1 sword 1 Pistol	3 . 5
2 pair of sheep shears	7 . 6
1 hundred st. Cheese	3 . 6 . 8
1 lb Blue Linen Yarn	0 . 5

7 Handkrs.	1 . 1
2 lb Sugar 1 do Coffee 1 Prl flat Irons	19 . 0
1 new Great Coat	4 . 0
7 Coats & 10 westecoats	34 . 10 .
8 pair Breeches & 3 Hatts	11 . 0
1 Fur Cap 1 Pr Boots	3 . 7 . 6
1 pair of Spatter dashes	1 . 0
2 Feather Beds Bolsters & pillows	16 . 0
9 Coverlids of different Sorts	22 . 10 .
6 pair of Blankets & 6 Pr. sheets	19 . 10 .
4 pair of Pillow Cases	1 . 0
3 Chaff Beds & Bolsters	2 . 8
2 pair of Bedsteds & 5 Bed Coards	2 . 7 . 6
2 Cloth Cloaths 1 Callico Quilt	5 . 0
1 Camblet petticoat 1 double Gown	2 . 10 .
6 Lindsey pettocoats 6 Gowns	4 . 10 .
22 Shirts & Shifts Coarse & fine	11 . 0
8 aprons	1 . 0
6 Yards Strip'd Linen	1 . 13 .
8 pair of strip'd Trousers	2 . 0
1 Diaper Table Cloth	1 . 10 .
6 pair stockings 2 pair Gloves	2 . 0
Childs Cloths of sundry sorts	4 . 0
1 Callico Bag 2 pair of stays	5 . 0
6 pairs shoes & 1 Hackle	2 . 12 . 6
1 Beaver Hatt 1 pewter teapot	2 . 12 . 6
2 pewter Dishes 1 Bason & Tankard	2 . 7 . 6
2 pewter plates	1 . 15 .
1 Looking Glass 1 Set China 6 Cups & Sausers	3 . 5
2 tin pans 1 Coffee pot & fummell	0 . 12 .
2 teapots 2 Cream Jugs 3 delf Bowls & 3 plates	1 . 17 . 6
9 Milk pans & sundry Earthenware	3 . 0
2 Copper Tea Kettles 1 do sausepan	3 . 7 . 6
2 Large Iron pots & 2 Candle sticks	1 . 15 .
1 doz. Knives & Forks 1 do spoons	1 . 10
2 Cyder Tubs 3 peles & Churn	1 . 10 .
1 Pewter Bottle 3 Canisters 1 Brass warmingpan	1 . 13 .
1 soap Box & double Case of razors	0 . 15 .
12 Bags & Frying pan a number of Bottles	7 . 0 . 6
6 Bushels of Dried apples 12 Trenchers	2 . 12 . 6
6 Blind Halters 1 set Bells	5 . 10 .
5 pair hems & 5 Collers	2 . 5
5 pair Chains with Back bands and Belly Bands & Crupers	7 . 10 .
1 Cart Saddle & back Band	1 . 10 .
1 Iron Square & post ax	0 . 12 .
Damage done Desk Book Case and Case of Drawrs	4 . 0
1 Bible & a number of other Books	3 . 0
3 Chairs destroy'd & others damaged	1 . 0
2821 Rails	14 . 2

762 stakes  
Damage Done to the Timber

2 . 5  
3 . 0  
544 . 11 . 8

Nover. 19th 1782. Before Me the Subscriber Came George Brinton who on his affirmation did declare & say that the above articles was from him taken and Destroy'd which articles are Reasonably valu'd; which valuation amounts to five hundred and forty four pounds 11/8 and further saith he never Recei'd any part or value for any part or parcel thereof Except as within Mentioned affirmed Before me Isaac Taylor.

Geo. Brinton"

2. From typed copy of original manuscript /probably written by John Hill Brinton/ in possession of The Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania:

"1845 Ziba Darlington says--

I recollect the old Cabin built by William Brinton the Emigrant It was removed to my lane end, on the Wilmington road, and was existing in the year 1800. I was a lad then.

The site of the Cabin was kept known by the old pear tree, planted by the Emigrant in his garden (unfortunately cut down by the mistake of a laborer in 1852.) It was built of yellow poplar. The trees were sawed into plank with a whip saw. The Emigrant and his family lived in it for a number of years, and he died in it before his son, William Brinton the younger, built his house in 1704.

Some of the children of William the Younger were born in the Cabin. He married in 1690 Jean Thatcher the daughter of a neighboring colonist and William the Father and Wife Ann and the son and his wife occupied the Cabin together for awhile.

The house of William the Younger had in the West Gable end, the letters

B  
W and J  
1704

They were not cut in the plastering but merely painted on it. Some years ago, before Thomas Brinton sold it, he whitewashed over them. They are however yet visible by getting a ladder and ascending to them.

"1850 Catharine G. Brinton (1850)

Your Father was 3 years old at battle of Brandywine. Grandfather, George Brinton, sent Grandmother and the children over to their relatives Peirces.

The house was turned upside down and plundered-beds cut open-the clock case split, and its works taken-found six months afterwards in Parry woods, wrapped in a blanket. These works were probable brought from England, when first settlement made.

Father got a new case and face. The clock is now Henry's.

"1857 Ziba Darlington.

I have found remains of the Barn which belonged to the house of William Brinton the son built 1704. The plough turned them up, between the house and the road (Wilmington)--pieces of mortar.

"August 23, 1868

The old 1704 house has just been roofed anew by its present occupant, Mr. Faucett, and he has put an ornamental chimney and added a small north and south gable in the middle of the roof over the doors.

The date has thus been removed, but in the west chimney he has the date copied on a marble piece and inserted. (W. & J.B.)

1704

I measured some corn stalks in his field northwest of the house, 12 feet high, ears 7 feet to the commencement of them, lower end. But in brother Henry's far field, I found stalks equally tall (four times the length of my cane) and ears 7 feet 6 inches to the butt from the ground. I could not reach them. Ears 14 inches long, that is the cob.

Ziba Darlington says that in 1828 he took possession of the 1704 as its owner by purchase from Thomas Brinton. It was in bad repair. He renewed the floor of the sitting room, the south doors (sitting room and the door to the cellar kitchen) the stairs, window frames, renewed the roof, walled up the two small windows first floor west end, and put a shed over the pump, and dug a cistern by the southeast end of the house, and added a small frame addition to the east of the house.

He saw these woodworks were gone entirely, so decayed that he pushed the pent eaves down with his cane.

What remains of the old house is the floor of the west room first story. The floor of the second story, the north door. This pretty much all of the wood work. The sleepers of the first story, of the second story and of the roof are of the original building; have not been renewed. These rafters are hewn, not sawed, that is the roof rafters.

That north door of the first floor is an old hardy fellow, is of double thickness; has its old iron hinges and painted red. This red coat was renewed in 1828 by Ziba Darlington. The latch is wood, but that is a successor of the earlier latch, and was made by Thomas Cox in 1828.

Mr. Darlington says that the appearance of the house in 1828 was extremely venerable. The outside of the walls was covered with a green mould; the chimney's (brick) were long necked, five feet above the comb of the roof with a white moulding below the top, and then below was the date W. & J.B. plainly visible.

1704

Mr. D. reduced the chimneys 18 inches; he also took down all the pent eaves, renewed the roof and woodwork, as stated; mortared the kitchen (cellar) floor and adjoining cellar. Originally the kitchen

floor was flags and the cellar floor earth. The whitewash took off the green mould and then he whitewashed anew, which has been renewed.

Mr. D. states that William Brinton (born there in 1755 and died after 1830) told him the old house had pent eaves round the north, south and west sides, and a porch over the south door with seats at right angles with the front of the house. It was a "stoop" and its similar may yet be seen in old houses in this county and in England.

Brother Henry says that Father told him in 1831 (the year of his decease) that the old burial place of the Colonist and his wife was a little north of his fence (Henry's fence) which strikes the Township line from the east, that is rather on the north slope of the high ground by the line. Father blamed much the ploughing of the field where their remains lay, and was willing to contribute and have it enclosed in perpetual memory of their resting place. I reason now that there is the exact spot. I also always heard so, though I placed the place a little further up the hill by the line. I reason that brother Henry is right from these considerations.

There was no pump by the cabin as anybody ever heard of. The Colonist drew his water (must have done so) from the nearest spring head of the site of the cabin, near Faucett's north line but on the Parry or Ruth Brinton Johnson farm. To that spring there would be a road from the cabin, road or path, and that road extended east, would reach the burial spot, and most likely they would not go further up the slope of the hill than Father indicated. Then it was woods I suppose; now 1868, August 23, a tilled, well grassed extremely fertile field.

I thus relate these facts minutely in order that some future Brinton, descended from the Colonist (if he so minds) may restore the old house to its primitive aspect and plant memorial stones where these settlers rest. Brother Henry added that some years ago a hand of his, renewing the fence along there, in setting up the posts, found a bone like a rib bone, a piece of it was so horrified that he avoided the place henceafter.

Could this be a human bone, the remains of the dead interned there? The ground must have been much abraded from its natural surface in 1699 & 1700, the dates of the burial, or the interment must have been shallow. But in 150 years would not all traces of the skeletons be gone?

These are speculations,- But there is their cabin's site; there is the spot where grew their pear tree; there is their burial spot; and there is the 1704 house (which they never saw) built by their son William) which remains pretty much as he put it up. In the southeast corner, some 10 feet up, is a crack in the wall, south face. It will stand, however, if not torn down, a comfortable dwelling for another 164 years, and be a valuable relic of the first settlement in these distant and secluded wilds.

Ziba Darlington says that stream which flows through your brother Henry's farm and also through Caleb Brinton's was called many years ago "The Sand Run."



"January 26 1865. Spoke to Ziba Darlington of my examining the title to the Edward Brinton Mill Premises which led to a conversation about olden time matters. Ziba was born 1788, and is now in his 78th year.

He said the old 1704 house of William Brinton, the younger, was built of stone got out of a Quarry near Thornbury School House, west of it four hundred yards in a woods of old George Brintons farm. The old house of George Brinton and of Eavenson were built of stone got from the same Quarry.

Ziba found the remains of the foundation of the Barn, which belonged to the old 1704 house. It was west of the house and between it and the present Wilmington road.

He says the land about the house is unusually rich, raised grain and corn such as he hardly ever saw equalled. In laying down a mortar floor in the old 1704 house, he found the soil was sand. This old house at one time had three dormer windows in the south roof and two in the north roof. It was quite an undertaking to build such a house at that time (1704)

"January 16, 1867. An interesting talk this evening with Ziba Darlington, which I now note down, though not so much given to doing so of late... He was born in 1788--and forty years ago owned and lived in the old Brinton House of 1704--built by William the Son.

Ziba says 'I recollect distinctly the remains of the Brinton Cabin (of 1684). It is as far back as 1802 or 1804. The plank of the cabin was removed from its original site, and put up into a new building at my lane end or near the end on the north side of the lane.

I learned from William Brinton, (born 1754 or 6) that it was the remains of the Cabin, and most likely Williams father-George the son of old Edward Brinton (Edward born in 1704) moved this plank and re-constructed them. It was used for stock in its new form.

The plank was probably three inches thick, and pinned together when they formed the Cabin, with modern pins for they would not spike such plank. The roof of the cabin most likely was made of oak riven like shingles and not shaven (called \_\_\_\_\_) and held on by poles.

This cabin may have been there in its new form as late as the War of 1812--but not later. The old Wilmington road took off to the east by my lane end originally and curved round to near--and west of the site of the Cabin--then came out near by the present Tavern at Dilworthstown, south of the Tavern.

The Barn belonging to the 1704 house, I discovered--or its site rather. It stood twenty yards from the Wilmington road and some ten or fifteen north of my lane. The foundation I discovered--remains of masonry. This was when I owned the premises.

The old pear tree by the Cabin was probably natural fruit. I placed some of its pears on exhibition at an Agricultural Fair at West Chester once, as those of a Tree as old as the Battle of the Boyne.

The pears were not of such a quality as would lead one to believe that the tree was brought over from England.

The present Barn of the 1704 house was built about 1775, William Brinton cut his initials on a stone of it in 1775--They were to be seen when I was the owner--and may be yet. The upper part was frame.

"July 27, 1867

Ziba Darlington further said, I took down the front eaves and cornice of the 1704 Brinton house, in 1828 when I bought there. It was decayed entirely--and came down by a slight effort. The upper floor, the rafters of the roof, and the floor downstairs, west room, are the original. I put in new door south of the house--but left the north door which is the old original. Sash of the windows I put in. Old partitions (board) I took out and put in new.

The porch at first, was a Stoop, a small Porch over the South door with side seats. This William Brinton (Wm 1754) told me he recollects, when a boy it was there.

"July 3, 1869. Ziba Darlington says that Faucett is making sad alterations in the old 1704 Brinton house; has taken out the large chimney jambs, and made two doors on the west front of the house and extended the porch around on that side. Very sorry to hear of it.

In reference to the persons by whom this 1704 house has been occupied, the following notice prepared by Ziba Darlington appears in the Village Record of July 1869. Mr. Darlington completed his 81st year on the 1st day of June 1869.

The Old Brinton House:-- 'Just five miles from West Chester, on the Wilmington Road, many of our readers have doubtless noticed a farm house standing surrounded by trees, and looking the picture of neatness. It is now in Birmingham Township, Delaware County, yet it at one time was in our County, and its history is part of ours. It is, we think, the oldest house now standing in either Chester or Delaware Counties, and is besides the old homestead of our largest and most influential Chester County families. The house was erected in 1704 by William and Ann Brinton, who, with his parents, came from Birmingham, England, in the year 1684, the parents being very old at the time of their arrival. The mother died in 1699 and the father in 1700, and they were buried on these premises. It is believed that all the name in Pennsylvania descended from this pair. They all occupied a log cabin during the life of the parents and till the erection of the mansion in 1704. William Jr. married Jane Thatcher in the year 1690. The house remains very much the same as in their day, and since its erection has been occupied by the following persons, for the length of time affixed to their names: William Brinton, 47 years; George Brinton, 42 years; Joseph Brinton, 12 years; Joseph Brinton, Esq., 24 years; Ziba Darlington, 32 years; Henry Faucett, 8 years.'

"West Chester Sunday Dec. 4, 1870. At about noon I started with Ziba Darlington for a drive to Chadds Ford and back...

We then came to the old Brinton house of 1704, got out, went in and examined it. Mr. Faucett was very kind and permitted us to

gratify our curiosity. The mantel-piece in the east room is ancient; the great sleeper supporting the second story (165 years old) floor remains solid and strong. Mr. D. says he had it planed to remove the cuts of the axe so visible then but some yet remain. There were two similar sleepers in the west room, but they were hewed off to a level with the ceiling, and still support the upper floor. Mr. D. said there were partitions with sides of an entry running from the south to the north door.

The walls are 22 inches thick. Mr. Faucett says similar stone are found in brother Henry W. Brinton's woods, adjoining him, a very fine, smooth, large building stone. They can be seen in the stream in the woods.

"West Chester Jan. 12, 1872.

Mrs. Faucett, whose husband resides in the old 1704 Brinton house, brought me a picture frame.

The sill of the north door of the house had been removed, new sills or rather frame and door had been made this last summer.

By the sill or frame I mean the upright piece of wood to which the door is swung by hinges.

Out of this frame the present picture frame is made and presented to me. It is of walnut, sound and hard, and looks ancient. It was hard to work up. In the lower strip, inside, is the mark of a nail.

This wood was made up for the door 168 years ago. The nails used were wrought nails. The door was walnut also, and three boards thick, nailed securely together. It is preserved by Mr. Faucett.

Ziba Darlington, born 1788, says the door and frame were the original. He knows the house for 70 years back and lived in it a number of years."

Prepared by Bart Anderson Date July 1958  
Curator, Chester County Historical Society

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This early (1704) stone house retains its original design although extensively restored.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent

### B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Main building 22' by 40'; addition to east 16' by 22'

2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction: Quarried stone, laid in courses of various widths.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads etc.:
5. Chimneys: Considerably rebuilt from notes in diary as to original height, markings etc.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main doorways to the outside original frames, doors replaced from early notes.
  - b. Windows and shutters: All window openings in original place and size.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Very steep pitch, wooden shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Reproduced from an original section found on east end of house - had been covered over by an addition.
  - c. Dormers, cupolas: Three to the south, two to the north (dormers). Had been removed but marks were plainly visible on original rafters. Described in the diary notes mentioned above.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: From diary notes and from clear and complete physical evidence, the basement had been the original kitchen and there were two small cellars on the west end of the house, the north one a cold cellar and the south one a warm cellar. The first floor had the hall and lower room (parlor chamber) and the second floor three bedrooms. Unfinished attic. All is that way now.
2. Stairways: Original stairs had been moved and changed. Present ones in the northeast corner follow original markings.
3. Flooring: All original except the hall (first floor east) which was renewed 1829 by Ziba Darlington, the new owner.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Ceilings all plastered. East and west walls all sheathed in walnut. North and south outside walls of rooms and halls all plastered. Beams exposed in basement kitchen and warm cellar.
5. Doorways and doors: Interior doors all renewed.
6. Trim: No baseboards in house - window sills all replaced.
7. Hardware: Front door hinges, hall crane original; rest of hardware all reproduced.
8. Lighting: Lighted now by candle sticks according to 1751 and 1756 inventories.
9. Heating: Basement kitchen fireplace and bake oven original. Fireplaces in east room of hall and west wall of parlor chamber rebuilt from clear markings. Bedroom at west end of second floor rebuilt from careful markings. All had raised hearths. Chimney supports original in basement.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Placed facing south between #202 and the old Wilmington Road, south of village of Dilworthtown.
2. Enclosures: None at present.
3. Outbuildings: Privy - 8' by 10' facing south - late eighteenth century. Chair House 25' by 28' facing south - early nineteenth century.
4. Walks: None
5. Landscaping: Oldest tree left a beech - probably as old as the house. Others along line of original lane younger.

Prepared by Bart Anderson Date July 1958  
Curator, Chester County Historical Society